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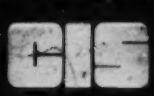

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HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

ONE HUNDREDTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

IRINA RATUSHINSKAYA

MARCH 31, 1987

Printed for the use of the
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PUBLIC HEARING: IRINA RATUSHINSKAYA

TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 1987

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE,
Washington, DC.

The Commission met, pursuant to notice, in room 2255, of the Rayburn House Office Building, at 9:30 a.m., Representative Steny H. Hoyer, Chairman, presiding.

In attendance: Commissioners Jack Kemp, Bill Richardson, and Richard Schifter.

Also in attendance: Sam Wise, staff director, and Mary Sue Hafner, deputy staff director and general counsel of the Commission.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN HOYER

Chairman HOYER. I am going to call the hearing of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe to order.

I want to welcome to my right Congressman Jack Kemp, one of the leaders on our Commission, one of the leaders on human rights in not only the Congress but in our country, and one of those who continues to keep very high the torch of freedom for those in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union who are facing repression and a diminishment of their rights. We are very pleased to have Congressman Kemp here.

Mr. KEMP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HOYER. To my left is Assistant Secretary Schifter, former Ambassador, or I guess you never become a former Ambassador, Ambassador Schifter, who is the person on behalf of the administration who is in charge of our human rights focus. Ambassador Schifter is also a member of this Commission, having been appointed by the Secretary of State to represent the Department of State.

We are very pleased to have both of them here. We hope to have other members here, as well.

Today's hearing is for the purpose of hearing from Irina Ratushinskaya and her husband, Igor Gerashchenko. We are honored to have them, and I want to welcome both as witnesses.

Our witnesses will be presenting testimony about those who suffer when human rights are denied.

Irina, I want to say that the Commission is very pleased and honored to have before it a writer who has been hailed as the finest poet of her generation in the Soviet Union. The grace, the strength, the lyrical truth of your writings and beliefs incurred the massive wrath of the Soviet state. In 1983, Ms. Ratushinskaya began to

serve a 7-year sentence of hard labor, to be followed by 5 years of internal exile.

Then, unexpectedly but happily, on October 9, 1986, she was released from imprisonment. Irina, there are individuals throughout history who appear at a particular moment in time, when they have the opportunity and ability to focus the attention of their country and the world on problems that need addressing, to dramatize the plight of others who need help and to energize others to action. You are one of those people. The Commission is honored by your presence here today.

We will work with you to insure that those on whose behalf you speak today, the Latvian, Doronina, and the Russian, Borodin, are not forgotten. Whatever efforts we can make, we will do so. Those efforts pale, of course, when compared with those that you have already made.

And, Igor, I want to welcome you, as well. The Commission is very honored by your presence; a distinguished engineer in your own right, a human rights activist, a thermonuclear engineer who was living in Kiev during the Chernobyl disaster. During the years of Irina's imprisonment, you waged a constant battle for her freedom.

We have an example in the United States of another individual who did the same, Avital Shcharansky, whom I sure you know. I do not know whether you met her, but I am sure you know of her, and perhaps you have met her, who, like yourself, kept high the focus of the world on the sought after freedom of a loved one.

Your victory, Igor, is our victory and, indeed, the world's victory. We welcome both of you to the United States.

Irina, at this time I would like to recognize you for such statement as you would like to make. You have seated to your left, as you know, Cathy Cosman of our staff who speaks Russian fluently and will be able to assist you. However, in my discussions with you prior to the onset of the hearing, it did not sound to me like you needed any help. I am always amazed at the facility our visitors have with the English language and lament how little facility most of us have with the languages of others.

At this time it gives me great privilege to recognize you, Irina.

Prior to your speaking, if I may, because I know Congressman Kemp has the Secretary of the Treasury before the Appropriations Committee and will have to leave shortly after we begin, I would like to take the opportunity to recognize him at this time for such statement as he would like to make.

COMMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE JACK F. KEMP FROM NEW YORK

Mr. KEMP. Mr. Chairman, I really have no statement except to join you in welcoming Igor and Irina to our Committee and thank them on behalf of freedom loving men and women around the world we look to examples of courage, such as yours, to give us hope.

In the United States, on this Commission, whether we be Republican or Democrat, we are Americans, and as we celebrate the 200th anniversary of our Constitution this year, I am reminded of

the fact that the United States Constitution was written primarily for the people of the United States, but the Declaration of Independence that all children of God have inalienable rights was written for the world, for mankind. Those of us who are on this Commission believe very strongly that the God who gives life gives freedom, and that freedom is the inalienable right of all men and women everywhere. Today you, Irina and Igor, help us celebrate what America means, as a beacon of light to the world, and we are grateful that you are here and for your testimony.

And those of us who run in and out of our committee meetings, it is only because all of us have two or three committee meetings going on at one time. It is not to in any way denigrate the very important example and testimony that you have prepared, but also the exigencies of the moment that require that we be in three places at one time.

But I am delighted to welcome you and appreciate the very kind and thoughtful comments of my good friend and colleague from Maryland, Mr. Hoyer, our Chairman. I wish both of you continued success and Godspeed in your very, very vital work, not only on the college campuses of America, but also for those freedom loving men and women around the world.

Thank you. Thank you, sir.

Chairman HOYER. Thank you, Jack.

Now, I would like to recognize Secretary Schifter.

COMMENT OF HON. RICHARD SCHIFTER

Mr. SCHIFTER. Let me just share one brief comment with you. Irina and I had a very worthwhile meeting. Igor joined us. After that I told her how all of us are really indebted to her for what she has done for the cause of freedom. Her response to me was, and I will always remember that, "I did only 4 years. Others have done 20."

Chairman HOYER. Irina. You note that we use "Irina" and "Igor." It is only because we all find that an easier way to address you, and we hope that you do not think us too familiar at the outset.

STATEMENT OF IRINA RATUSHINSKAYA

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Recently, the initial process of democratization in the Soviet Union has been broadly discussed. As a rule, in these discussions the borderline between facts and promises is erased. Without touching upon promises and forecasts for the future, I would like to say a few words about the facts.

At the moment, as far as I know, 103 political prisoners have been released from prisons, labor camps and internal exiles. This is certainly good news. However, one should remember that there are about 4,000 political prisoners in the U.S.S.R. I believe that the actual situation should be judged not by the number of those released, but by the number of those prisoners of conscience who are still behind bars. I would like to name only a few of them.

Petro Ruban, a Ukrainian artist who has spent in total 23 years in camps. One of the sentences was given because he created a

commemorative gift to the American people on the occasion of the Bicentennial. It was a wooden carving of the Statue of Liberty.

Lidija Doronina, a 60-year-old Latvian. She was given her sentence for taping Western broadcasts and giving these tapes to her friends and neighbors. She is now in internal exile.

Leonid Borodin, a Russian writer. He is serving his sentence in camp for his books published in the West.

I will not read the whole list of political prisoners in the Soviet Union or our meeting would continue until tomorrow. I would like only to point out that even those who have been released have not been exonerated. Before they were released, prisoners were required to sign written renunciations of their views. If they refused to do so, the Supreme Soviet decrees on their release were not published.

I can testify to the fact that the authorities tried to force prisoners to write such recantations by means of blackmail and torture. However, the majority of prisoners did not sign such statements.

Why did the Soviet authorities force clearly innocent people to make false admissions? Why are they so shy to publish their own decrees under conditions of the broadly publicized "glasnost?" Because otherwise they would be obliged not only to exonerate those who suffered without guilt, but also to make responsible those who arrested, charged and tried them. This is the party and KGB apparatus.

I can assure you, however, that all of those individuals continue to occupy their positions, and they are not threatened even with the public reprimand for their crimes. By their very hands, Gorbachev hopes to realize what he calls the restructuring of society, and this very fact should give rise to doubts in the democratic nature of such restructuring. Mark Twain remarked that an old dog cannot be taught new tricks.

Does anything critically new occur in the U.S.S.R. with regard to human rights? Soviet authorities have promised to publish several forbidden books and have released several new movies. However, the list of forbidden books in the U.S.S.R. is still a thick volume. Does it become much shorter after two or three titles were removed?

Soviet Samizdat is still underground, and Orwell's and Solzhenitsyn's books, sometimes with Bibles, are still confiscated during searches. Isn't it too early to talk about freedom in literature, in the arts in the Soviet Union?

People have a right to communicate regardless of national borders. However, everyone who has telephoned from the United States to the U.S.S.R. knows how difficult it is to go through Soviet telephone operators. Why does this army of operators exist if during the Moscow Olympics in 1980 automatic telephone lines were operative? Only a switch would activate this automatic system.

This would, however, deprive the KGB of the possibility of restricting communication between people. In this case, KGB agents could do nothing but wiretapping and could not decide who is permitted to talk to whom and who is not.

The letters of Soviet citizens with people in other countries are censored and restricted. When I came to the West, I learned about

the thousands of letters sent to me from various countries which did not reach me.

No Soviet political prisoners have ever gotten a single letter from abroad. You can easily verify it yourself by sending a letter to any political prisoner in the U.S.S.R. and then waiting for an answer.

Direct communication is also restricted. Very few Soviet citizens receive permission for a trip abroad, not to mention emigration. Travel of foreigners inside the Soviet Union is limited to several cities, and one is not allowed to travel more than 40 kilometers (25 miles).

As a result, tens of thousands of people cannot leave the Soviet Union, and foreigners can see only what Soviet authorities want them to see. The new Soviet law on exit and entry into the U.S.S.R. only legalized violations of the Helsinki accords. It permitted foreign travel only to close relatives, and even then there are further restrictions.

I believe that one can talk about real democratization in the Soviet Union only after the Soviet Government fulfills three important conditions.

First, the release of all political prisoners and a change in Soviet law so that people are not tried for expressing their views.

Second, guarantees of freedom of the press, truly independent publishing houses, and an end of jamming foreign broadcasts.

Third, the opening of Soviet borders.

These elementary demands are in full agreement with the Helsinki accords. They are not observed only in totalitarian states. I am certain that no governmental cosmetic complaint will prevent people from distinguishing a totalitarian society from a democratic one.

If Gorbachev really wants democratization in the U.S.S.R., let us help Gorbachev by showing him the difference between reality and his promises.

Chairman HOYER. Thank you very much.

I think we will recognize Igor for purpose of making his statement, and then we will allow members of the Commission if they would like to ask questions of you, and we can have further discussion.

But before I do so, I would like to introduce Mr. Bill Richardson, the Congressman from the State of New Mexico. Congressman Richardson is one of our dynamic, newly appointed member of the Commission. He is not, however, new to human rights.

Bill, with your permission I will recognize you for whatever statement you would like to make after Igor testifies.

I would like to now recognize Igor Gerashchenko.

STATEMENT OF IGOR GERASHCHENKO

Mr. GERASHCHENKO. I was in the city of Kiev during the Chernobyl accident and lived in a city contaminated with radioactivity for more than 6 months. I worked at a factory which produces and repairs equipment for nuclear powerplants in the Soviet Union.

I am familiar with construction and operation of nuclear powerplants in the U.S.S.R., and thus, I was not surprised by the Cherno-

byl accident. I am more surprised that other nuclear reactors do not blow up in the U.S.S.R.

My pessimism is explained by the fact that no one in the U.S.S.R. knows what it means to follow production technology. It is perhaps good to use slave labor in building pyramids, but not nuclear powerplants.

Judge yourself what the quality of the equipment was if all three reactor back-up cooling systems did not function in Chernobyl.

Anything can happen in the U.S.S.R., and the Soviets will call it "internal affairs." Only sometimes the consequences of those internal affairs reach democratic nations in the form of a radioactive cloud.

There was a joke after the Chernobyl explosion that Western governments appealed to the Soviet Government requesting to substitute the "Iron Curtain" around the Soviet Union for a lead one.

To pacify world public opinion, the Soviet Government reported that about 30 individuals died as a result of the accident and about 300 individuals were exposed to radiation.

The explosion, in which more than 150 tons of radioactive substances were thrown into the atmosphere, occurred in a densely populated area. That is 10,000 times more than during the Hiroshima bombing. As you know, a total of 70,000 people died in Hiroshima.

Evacuation was begun only 36 hours after the explosion. Top party bosses, however, evacuated their wives and children from Kiev much quicker. I saw many governmental cars at the Kiev railway station the day after the explosion.

At all Kiev institutions and factories, devices for measuring radioactivity were taken away. They were returned only 2 weeks after the accident. Even now Soviet custom officials confiscate devices for measuring radioactivity from foreigners.

As far as I know from my friends who work in the two largest Kiev hospitals, 15,000 individuals died in 5 months in those hospitals alone. People with acute radiation sickness were recorded as suffering from "vascular atonia." When they died they were discharged from the hospital as those who "have undergone treatment" and "do not require further treatment." There will be much more of those cynically recorded deaths.

Agricultural products contaminated with radioactivity were not destroyed. Crops were packed in boxes stamped with a notice that they had been grown in regions remote from Chernobyl. As far as I know, nuclear powerplants are not weapons. It would be good if they were not a means of mass destruction.

The one secret at a nuclear powerplant can only be how badly it is constructed. Why shouldn't an international commission be established so that operation of any nuclear powerplant anywhere in the world be forbidden without inspection and permission of such a commission?

Chernobyl demonstrated that there are no countries that have "internal affairs" in nuclear energy issues. There is only one objective: to keep our planet fit for human habitation.

Chairman HOYER. Thank you for your statement which I found certainly compelling and chilling. I think all of us would agree that there clearly was no border as it related to Chernobyl and no na-

tionality that was unaffected. I think you make a very compelling point.

At this point I would like to recognize Mr. Richardson from New Mexico for the purpose of making such statements as he would like to make.

STATEMENT OF BILL RICHARDSON FROM NEW MEXICO

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for holding this hearing. You have set a dramatic new course for this committee, and I think as the gentleman mentioned, this is my second hearing that I have attended. So I am in the process of educating myself, and I do not have any opening statement. I will have some questions.

I thank the Chairman.

Chairman HOYER. Thank you.

Irina, let me ask you some questions. First of all, I would like you to describe the role the nationality question has played in your life. For example, you have said that you consider yourself to be Polish by national origin. What significance does that have in the Ukraine? What impact does that have?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. I think the national question is a more difficult question in U.S.S.R. I am afraid it is one of the most difficult questions all over the world. It is very painful to understand how does it separate people, and I felt it not when I was born in Odessa. Odessa belongs to Ukraine, but only officially. There are a lot of people from different nations nowadays, and they do not feel any national difference.

So I myself cannot understand why it is so important, these national questions, but I know it is really so. When I moved to Kiev I felt the problems of the Ukrainian language or the problems of Ukrainian culture in Ukraine because really Ukrainian culture is destroyed not by Russian people, but by Communists, and I can say that Russian culture is also destroyed by Communists, but sometimes KGB men try to make enemies between people from different nations, and I really felt it.

But it seems to me when we have the common enemy, we do not need the enemies between ourselves. When we were in the labor camp, there were a lot of women from different nations with different religions, and we helped one another all the time. We did not argue about national questions, but we tried to help one another. We prayed together. We celebrated all religious holidays. So we had two Christmases, two Easters, and it did not bother us.

So I hope the national question would be solved in our country, but now it is not so because I know that Ukrainian culture and other cultures in the Soviet Union really have a lot of problems.

Chairman HOYER. Thank you. You certainly make a good point that we ought to build upon what is common as opposed to emphasizing differences. That is true all over the world.

Irina, you have been called a religious poet. Could you tell us what influence religion has had in your life and work particularly since the Soviet Union is an athiest nation?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. I do not consider to be as a specially religious poet. Of course, religion takes a big part of my life. So some

of my poems, many of my poems are devoted to God, but I did not want to be only a religious or only a political poet. I want to deal with all important things which are important to our generation.

With our generation, Soviet authorities are not successful. They have produced no new kind of special Soviet people. A lot of young people of our generation turn to God because they did not believe in Communist devotion, and I was only one among these people.

Chairman HOYER. You were not the only one?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. I was only one among many young people who turned to God in our generation.

Chairman HOYER. Now, you were born in Odessa, and this is the last question and I will recognize Secretary Schifter and Mr. Richardson, but you were born in Odessa, and after your marriage you moved to Kiev. Can you tell me what differences there were, if any, from living in Odessa and living in Kiev? What changes occurred and were there political differences that you found to be present in those two cities?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Kiev is the capital of Soviet Ukraine, and there are a lot of Soviet authorities, a lot of members of KGB and party operatives, and it really changes the face of the city because I do not know why, but they are all afraid of their own people, and they try to protect themselves. This is the reason the KGB is much more strict, much more cruel than in other cities of the U.S.S.R.

When I was given 7 years of hard labor camp and 5 years of exile, I was not surprised because KGB in Ukraine did it. In Odessa, we did not feel so harsh this KGB power because Odessa is far from the capital. It is provincial, and we had no such problems in Odessa, but in Kiev one can feel at every step that only Soviet authorities have rights in Ukraine.

I was not surprised when I learned those authorities' wives and children were evacuated first. It is usual for Ukraine. Those authorities get everything first, and other people have no rights. One feels it very clearly, especially in Kiev, in comparing with Soviet authorities.

Chairman HOYER. I said that was the last question before I recognized Secretary Schifter, but when I went to Moscow and then to Kiev in 1981, I found quite a difference between the two cities. I found the people in Kiev more animated on the street and more Western in their dress. Their dress was more colorful and more stylish. What I found in Moscow was a much more restrained and nonanimated people.

Have you found that contrast, and if so, to what do you ascribe it?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Yes. Moscow is the most unusual city in the Soviet Union. It is a special city for the Soviet Government and foreigners, and all citizens are serving foreigners and the Government. When the Moscow Olympic Games were in 1980, a lot of people had to move from Moscow. They were ordered to move from Moscow, and foreigners when they came found an empty city with policemen, KGB men, government and anybody else.

So, of course, there are a lot of intelligent people in Moscow, but it is very hard to have permission to live in Moscow because all Moscow citizens are controlled by the KGB, with Soviet militia,

and KGB are not very effective with those citizens; they must move from Moscow to other places, and it makes the face of the city, too.

Chairman HOYER. Thank you, Irina.

Secretary Schifter.

Mr. SCHIFTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Ratushinskaya, you have been identified as a political prisoner. I think it would be useful if you would tell us what made you that. What did you do? What were the circumstances of your arrest? What then happened at your trial? What was the evidence against you? What were the findings at the end of the trial? Could you tell us about that?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. In the charges against me, I was called an especially dangerous state criminal. There are several items in my sentence, and the first of these was my poetry. There were six poems which were considered as a crime by KGB man. The next item of my conviction was that I took part in human rights work. We were not terrorists. We did not use arms, but only words, truthful words, and it is very dangerous in the Soviet Union because our authorities do not like any independent voice.

We, my husband and I, sent openly to our government and to our Soviet people information about those cases of broken human rights we have seen. First, our letter was about Sakharov when he was sent in exile to Gorky. He was the last of our first generation of human rights activists who was free, because a lot of those people from the first generation were in labor camps and in prisons.

After he was taken to exile, we decided it was time for our generation to say our word because we did not want our authorities to speak on behalf of all the Soviet people. It would be a shame for our people if we should allow our authorities to speak on behalf of us.

So we have written some open letters. It was the second item of my sentence, and the third item was that we both kept forbidden literature in our house. There were poems of well-known Russian poets, like Max Voloshin, Kalashayan. There were different books which are forbidden in the Soviet Union. Altogether, these were my crimes.

Only one difference between my husband and I were my poems. So I was arrested, not he, and we decided the main reason for my crime is my poems.

When I was arrested I spent under investigation half a year in a special KGB prison. I was not allowed to send any letters to my relatives, and I was not allowed to get any letters and any newspapers. I was not allowed to meet my husband or my relatives. I was not allowed to choose my lawyer, and the KGB man said that they chose a lawyer themselves. This lawyer kept silence all during the trial.

Mr. SCHIFTER. A defense lawyer?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Yes.

Chairman HOYER. It sounds as if he was your "lack of defense" lawyer.

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. No one who knew me was allowed to be on this trial. My mother cried. I have heard her voice from the corridor. There is my daughter there. I want to see her, but she was not

allowed to go inside the trial room. So I did not even take part in this trial because I could not defend myself. They did not allow me. The lawyer did not take part in the trial either, and I was not even allowed to say my last word.

After that, they have given me my sentence, 7 years of labor camps and 5 years of exile, and I was sent to a special labor camp. It was a special labor camp for women prisoners, political prisoners.

Mr. SCHIFTER. Would you let us have the six poems for the record?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Of course, I am able to give these poems, but only in Russian, but some of them are still translated into English, and they are in different books published in the West.

Mr. SCHIFTER. Ms. Cosman will do the translating for us. Thank you.

Chairman HOYER. Mr. Richardson.

Mr. RICHARDSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Gerashchenko, you obviously lived through a difficult period. I am mainly interested in your assessment on the Soviet nuclear energy program after Chernobyl. Did Soviet scientists, and the Soviet public feel compelled to demand a stronger safety record?

Mr. GERASHCHENKO [translated by Mr. Dobczansky]. I worked at an enterprise that manufactured nuclear powerplant parts. This was prior to the explosion and afterwards.

Chairman HOYER. Cathy, the question Mr. Richardson is asking is the status of nuclear powerplants.

Mr. GERASHCHENKO. There were no safety measures installed or implemented after the explosion.

Mr. RICHARDSON. So, in your view, Soviet authorities have really not done anything to correct the problem?

Mr. GERASHCHENKO. I can only speak about the changes that were implemented at the enterprises that manufacture these parts. In the Soviet Union, the discussions and the debates are carried on. The subjects are various. I did not notice any changes at the enterprise level, which produce the parts for these thermonuclear reactors and electric stations.

I am convinced of the fact that the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear powerplant is not the final one in the Soviet Union. I do not have any doubts about this.

Mr. RICHARDSON. Irina, I would like to get your assessment. For instance, the "glasnost" policy promises a lot of artistic freedoms, and I would like your prediction in the area of poetry. For instance, do you see some of the Pasternak works eventually being published? Do you see any forward movement?

I know you have gone through a lot of anguish and concern, but do you see any light at the end?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Really, our government promised to allow to publish Pasternak's book "Dr. Zhivago," but as far as I know, after they promised it they said this book would be published only after a year. They allow to show some new movies, but it only a few of forbidden literature and forbidden movies which are allowed to publish in the Soviet Union now. What about others, if even Bibles are sometimes taken away in the searches? I know a lot of foreigners try to bring into Russia Russian Bibles, and a lot of

them were not allowed to do it. I know some easterners, and the best instance about "glasnost" I have seen during the Vienna Conference about human rights in January of 1987. There was a press conference of Soviet authorities who visited the Vienna Conference, and they were asking when will you release all political prisoners, and they answered, "There are no political prisoners in the Soviet Union." It is the best example of "glasnost" I know.

When I was released, a lot of people asked me, "Shall we now hide your poems? Will they take away your poems during the searches or your poems are not forbidden now?"

I did not know what to answer them. So I decided to turn to special literature newspaper in Moscow with some of my lyrical poems and asked them, "Will you be allowed to publish them or not?" The answer was "No."

Chairman HOYER. How long ago was that?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. It was after I was released. I sent this letter in November.

Chairman HOYER. Of 1986.

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. In 1968.

Chairman HOYER. You were very young.

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. 1986. The answer came when I was in London. It was in the beginning of January 1987.

Chairman HOYER. So long after "glasnost" was in bloom.

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. So my poems are still forbidden literature. I cannot say my poems are very good, but why they are forbidden, and of course, not only my poems are forbidden in the Soviet Union. I know it. So I do not believe in this "glasnost."

I did not see in the American newspaper very often the word "openness" because it is natural for the American newspaper. Everyone can write what he wants, and "glasnost" is not natural to the Soviet Union. So our authorities pretend to keep this "glasnost" and use this word very, very often.

Do remember Orwell's book, "New Language." "Glasnost" is one word of "New Language." They decided to use it, and they decided to teach this word to Western people. Do not believe them.

Mr. RICHARDSON. Do I have any more time?

Chairman HOYER. Yes.

Mr. RICHARDSON. I would like to ask a question of both Irina and Igor. This is going to be a very difficult question because like politicians, you are going to have to decide what is more important. The Chairman and the Speaker of the House, I believe, are going to Moscow and will probably meet with Mr. Gorbachev in the next 2 weeks over the Easter recess. If the Chairman and the Speaker were going to raise three things with Mr. Gorbachev in the area of human rights, what would you want them to ask?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Those three conditions I have mentioned before. Those conditions which must be fulfilled in the society is not totalitarian. We shall judge if the Soviet Union is still a totalitarian society or not by how they fulfill those three conditions: Open borders, freedom of speech and press, and freedom for all political prisoners in the U.S.S.R. and reforming the laws so that people would not be tried for expressing their views.

It seems to me those three conditions are much more important in our lives.

Mr. RICHARDSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman HOYER. I want to thank Mr. Richardson for asking the question because it gave you an opportunity to reiterate those three conditions that are in your statement. We certainly will raise them when we go to the Soviet Union. I might say that generally as a condition that is put forward, is that the Soviet Union and the United States and the 33 other signatories of the Helsinki Final Act simply do what they said they were going to do in August of 1975. However, I think you have crystallized it and made it specific, and I think that is very important and useful.

If I might, do you have the name of your lawyer? I am going to Kiev.

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Galina Koritchenko.

Chairman HOYER. Ms. Cosman will get that spelled correctly.

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. I shall write down this name.

Chairman HOYER. I ask that not so much because I am going to pick on this lawyer individually, but you know, we have had a controversy in the United States with reference to the American Bar Association's association with the Soviet Bar. Generally speaking, I have taken the position that it is useful for us to continue communications.

But I also think it is useful for us when we have a dramatic example of a member of the Soviet Bar obviously not performing what we believe to be a very basic, important, critical function, that is provide the best defense possible for one's client to raise that in our discussions.

Obviously, in your case, your testimony is relatively pointed that not only were you denied the best defense, but there was no defense at all. I think it is important that the executive departments, the Congress and the public sector bring up those questions.

I want to assure you that we will.

Now, let me ask Igor a question. Igor, you mentioned the figure 15,000 as having died as a result of Chernobyl. Can you tell us how you arrived at that figure?

Mr. GERASHCHENKO. I mentioned that 15,000 people died only in two hospitals in Kiev.

Chairman HOYER. And how do you know that? On what do you base that?

Mr. GERASHCHENKO. I know these figures because my close friends worked in these hospitals, and they took part in filling out documents.

Chairman HOYER. In other words the death certificates or some document such as that certifying?

Mr. GERASHCHENKO. No. When the people died [translated by Mr. Dobczansky] the death was treated as though it were a complete treatment or the treatment had been completed. They received all of the necessary medication.

Chairman HOYER. I take it that what you are saying is that the death was ascribed to some other reason, some other cause.

Ms. COSMAN. They did not admit that the people had died.

Chairman HOYER. OK, and that they left.

Mr. GERASHCHENKO. When Dr. Gale was in Kiev, he was shown a hospital where there were no victims, victims of the Chernobyl ac-

cident, radiation illness. The majority of the victims of the Chernobyl accident were to be found in two Kiev hospitals.

Chairman HOYER. Which hospitals were those?

Mr. GERASHCHENKO. The October Hospital and the Cblast Hospital.

Chairman HOYER. O-b-l-a-s-t?

Mr. DOBCZANSKY. Right.

Mr. GERASHCHENKO. And in both hospitals I have friends working there.

Chairman HOYER. And that is how you know?

Mr. GERASHCHENKO. Yes.

Chairman HOYER. So first-hand reports.

Mr. GERASHCHENKO. The level of radioactivity in Pripyat, near the Chernobyl powerplant, was more than 10 roentgen, and radiation was bigger only after 36 hours after the explosion. Then I suppose now all people who lived in Pripyat have died.

Chairman HOYER. Thank you. We are going to followup on that, and as I say, I am going to be visiting Kiev in a couple of weeks, and I am pleased to have that information.

By the way, let me introduce Jurij Dobczansky, who is a professional with the Library of Congress, who is interpreting for Igor, although Igor does not need as much interpretation as any of us would in his country. Thank you Mr. Dobczansky for your assistance today.

Irina, let me ask you. In the past Soviet authorities have not usually given women activists very long camp sentences. Nevertheless, you received, as you have told us, a 7-year camp term, plus a 5-year term of internal exile. Why do you think you received such a severe sentence?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Soviet people take their poetry very seriously. Why shouldn't our Government take poets very seriously?

There is a custom in Russia to have forbidden literature during all our history, and during all of our history forbidden literature, especially poetry, was hidden by a lot of people. It was dangerous for them, but what quality of literature must be if people are ready to go only for reading poetry to go to labor camps.

Chairman HOYER. Just for reading poetry?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Yes. I have told you from my sentence I was a criminal not only because I compose poetry myself, but because I had in my house poetry of other people. I was judged not only as a poet, but as a reader, too.

Chairman HOYER. Irina, the actual charge against you was anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Yes, and they decided to take together my poetry, my reading poetry, my taking part in human rights trouble is altogether anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda.

Chairman HOYER. Which is the general charge. One of the things that various Soviet representatives have told me and others who have met with them in Vienna is that there is going to be a major revision of the Criminal Code, and of course, during those discussions we bring up the sections that are most used against political prisoners, one of which was lodged against you. Did you have any indication prior to your leaving that there is going to be a change in that particular criminal statute?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. I did not know anything about this, about what they are going to do, but 32 years in Soviet Union taught me not to believe promises, to believe only facts, and now Soviet law is still in the same condition. There were not changes, and those articles, Article 70, anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, and article 190 still exist, and in Andropov's time, they added a third article, 188, section 3, and these articles allowed them to add any years they want to every political prisoner's sentence. They were very proud with this article, and they told all of us if you will not renounce your beliefs in writing, you will spend all of your life in prison and you will die in prison.

Chairman HOYER. On that point, when you were released, did they ask you to sign a confession or document which said that you would no longer participate in the activities that you had participated in prior to going to prison?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. They tortured me more than a year because they demanded me to sign such a paper. I refused to do it, and I did not sign anything like that, but during the last year I have spent in a special punishment cell more than half of the year. It was because a KGB man came to me and said, "Would you sign this paper?" I refused, and after that I was sent to a punishment cell.

Chairman HOYER. Was that like an isolation cell?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Yes, it is a special isolation cell. They took away all of my clothing except a short cotton gown, and it was very cold in these isolation cells, and they gave me meals, not every day, but every second day. It was real torture by cold, malnutrition and dirty.

Chairman HOYER. The cell was dirty?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Yes, of course, and we were not allowed to wash ourselves. It was only 15 minutes a week we were allowed to take showers, and they used to do it with a lot of other people. So do not be surprised if some of the people renounce their beliefs in writing because they were tired of tortures. Some of them were even beaten like Alexander Ogorodnikov. He was tortured with the help of American handcuffs.

[Translated by Ms. Cosman.] These handcuffs are designed in such a way that they tighten. The prison wardens hit on the chain between the handcuffs so that the handcuffs tighten to such a degree that all blood circulation is cut off and hands lose their sense of touch and feeling permanently.

Mr. GERASHCHENKO. American handcuffs unfortunately are the main instrument of torture in Soviet labor camps.

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. I was lucky. My hands were too thin, and they could not do anything with my hands.

Chairman HOYER. It would not close far enough?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Yes, yes.

Chairman HOYER. Let me ask you. Do you have any idea of how many political prisoners there still are in the Soviet Union? I know you do not have a precise figure, but do you have an estimate from discussions that you have had?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Usually for every political prisoner who was charged under article 70, there are 10, sometimes more than 10, political prisoners who are charged under article 190 or are falsely

charged as criminals or sent to psychiatric hospitals or to exile. So it is very easy to know the whole sum.

When I had met Kronid Lubarsky, who composed the list of well known political prisoners, he told me this figure, and this figure would agree with my estimation. So I use this figure: about 4,000 political prisoners.

Chairman HOYER. Thank you.

Mr. Richardson.

Mr. RICHARDSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Irina, you may be aware that the Soviet Union has proposed an international conference on humanitarian concerns, and there has been controversy as to whether the United States should attend—the concern being that it is being used primarily for propaganda purposes. Do you think that instead of helping Soviet human rights activists that it might hurt them, and what conditions should be attached to the United States participating in that conference?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Why shouldn't such an international commission be set up, which will deal with human rights in all those 35 countries who signed the Helsinki Agreement? I mean not meeting from one to another, like Madrid Helsinki Meeting or Vienna Helsinki Meeting, but a commission which will work all the time and everyone from those 35 countries would be allowed to turn to this commission with his own case of broken human rights. If he will be allowed to do it, not to ask permission from his government. This commission would be able to work on such cases, and this commission would be able to visit Soviet labor camps, to visit Soviet hospitals.

I understand that Soviet authorities would not be very happy with such a deal, but if they refuse to set up such an international commission, it would be a good answer, too. It would be sure to show the world they do not want to fulfill the Helsinki Agreement.

[Translated by Ms. Cosman.] I think the conditions for the creation and for the working of such a commission should be agreed on an international level. And one of the main points in the mandate for such a commission should be publishing in all of the newspapers of all of the participating States the address of that commission, to which all citizens should have the right to appeal.

Mr. GERASHCHENKO. It would be desirable that the membership of this commission could also include former political prisoners.

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Now, in the Vienna Conference only KGB agents and members of the Communist Party were allowed to speak on behalf of the Soviet people. So how can such a commission in Vienna work when there are no other representatives of other Soviet people?

There was a special Helsinki monitoring group in Moscow and other cities in the Soviet Union, but all of those members were sent to labor camps. So we cannot do it ourselves inside the country, but if an international commission worked all the time, it will help not only our country, but other people of other countries who have signed the Helsinki Agreement. It would be much more easy to watch: Is the Helsinki Agreement fulfilled or not?

It demands who would be able to represent the Soviet people in this meeting because all the time special people who are instructed by the KGB are allowed to represent our people. There are a lot of

political prisoners now, 103, who are released who are in their places. If you will agree to go to such a meeting, why wouldn't you invite as consultants those people who know the facts?

It is not necessary to believe Gorbachev or us, but you will compare these facts, and you will be able to judge yourself the real situation. It is very important to judge yourself and not believe anybody.

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Chairman, do I have time for one more question?

Chairman HOYER. Yes.

Mr. RICHARDSON. After I do this, I am going to have to leave, but I want to commend you and the staff, especially, for excellent preparatory work. They actually made me look reasonably knowledgeable and in a short period of time.

Chairman HOYER. That is what they are paid to do.

Mr. RICHARDSON. But I really want to commend them. I am on three committees, and I go in there, as I am going to one now, and I do not know the subject of the hearing, but I want to commend this effort.

Irina, I would like to ask you a question about your poetry.

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Yes.

Mr. RICHARDSON. I have just two short questions. One is: Do you find yourself being more creative, more able to write, in the United States now that you are free and maybe some of your anger has lessened?

The second is: Could you give a brief description of the kind of poetry you have. Is it mostly protest, religious, or political poetry? I tried to read one of your excerpts here, and the translation does not come through. I wondered if you could describe it in your own words.

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. Yes. I am not very happy with these translations, too, but what could I do? I was in a labor camp and I did not know the English language.

Mr. RICHARDSON. There were no translators there?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. No. So I shall look for a translator who will do it perfectly.

I did not want to deal only with one topic of my poems. So I have a lot of different topics, and I did not want to be a political poet, and I hope I am not because politics change every day, and I want to deal with much more important things. What is good? What is bad?

[Translated by Ms. Cosman.] These are eternal questions. They do not change.

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA [continuing]. And it seems to me the human rights is not only a political question. It is much broader because different states have different politics, and all people must have equal rights. It is very important. So my poems were not about members of our Government. I did not mention the Government or the KGB in my poems, but I tried to say the truth about our generation, about the experience of our generation, and about our problems.

There are different problems. One of the topics of my poems is my motherland. It is not very difficult to love a motherland which is not covered by shame, but I cannot say so about my motherland.

But still I love it, and I try to help my people to do something with our human rights and do not be so aggressive with other people as in Afghanistan. I feel this shame, but I want to get rid of it.

There were many, many poems for children in my poetry. I wanted to deal with all problems which seem important to my generation. Maybe one theme of my poems is about love. There are some poems about history, about God.

[Translated by Ms. Cosman.] I did not want to be limited to any particular theme.

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA [continuing]. And in labor camp, I did not write only about labor camp. So I hope I shall find a translator and publish my books which were written in labor camp.

Now, of course, I am much more free. I did not feel I am not free in labor camp because I did not do anything they wanted from me. I was free in my mind, but I could not keep what I have written with me. Of course, it was very difficult. I have learned by heart all my poems, but I could not turn my hand to prose. Now I am sure I will not be searched. So I am going to write a book about women's labor camps in the Soviet Union, about political ones and about criminal ones, because I was in both. I know the problems of women who are considered criminals, and I know the problems of army or Soviet guards, because they are not free, too. They are prisoners, too. Soviet soliders who have become guards, they sign a contract for 5 years to work in the prison, and they cannot leave and they cannot change their work. Soviet officers signed the same contracts for 25 years, and after, they cannot change their work, too.

There were many guards who even tried to help us because they understood we were not criminals, but they could not get rid of this work. It is a very difficult problem for our people because some of our people are spoiled by being guards. I shall write about it later.

Mr. RICHARDSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you both, all of you, for testifying.

Chairman HOYER. Thank you, Mr. Richardson. I appreciate your attendance.

Irina, interest in your case has had a great deal of support in the West. Can you tell me is it your impression that this support had an impact on your particular case, and does it have an impact on other cases?

Then could you tell us what advice and counsel you would give to us generally? The three points that you brought up in your statement will be raised in the Soviet Union and in Vienna and in other international fora. But would you tell me what impact you think that the West's interest in your particular plight had on your case and in general?

Ms. RATUSHINSKAYA. I am sure I am alive now and I am free now only because of the support of Western people. There were a lot of Soviet people who tried to help me, too. They have wrote a lot of letters to our government with demands to release me, but our government does not pay attention to their own people. Our government is very shy. It is so afraid of noise.

They pretend to have a human face. When somebody shows them, "Look, this and this and this, what are you doing with those people?" they must be careful with those people. I felt KGB men

were afraid to kill me. They promised to kill me. They wanted my husband to renounce his beliefs. They blackmailed him, and they promised him they will kill me if he will not sign such statements. He did not, but they did not kill me because they knew it would be very noisy in the West if they did it.

I was released on the 9th of October, 2 days before the Geneva meeting of Gorbachev and Reagan, and the first words in the press conference Reagan had or that Gorbachev had, Gorbachev told the correspondents, "Ratushinskaya is free now, and please, no more questions about her."

So it seems to me that Western support, Western publicity is very important to those Soviet prisoners who are still under very hard conditions. I know a lot of Soviet prisoners who are in labor camps are tortured and blackmailed now because the Soviet Government wants them to renounce their beliefs.

Why do they want that so much? They want to show these documents to Western people. "You see they are writing themselves. They are criminals. Why do you worry about them?" And these false admissions are what they want to show to Western people first of all. That is the reason our prisoners are tortured now.

It seems to me it would be very nice of Western people to support Soviet political prisoners as they supported me. I am very thankful to everyone who helped me and other political prisoners in our country.

Chairman HOYER. Thank you. I have some other questions, but I think that what we will do is give those questions to you and Igor, and perhaps you can answer them in writing or perhaps in discussion with some of our staff.

I think I speak for all of those who were in attendance and for Senator DeConcini, our Cochairman who could not be here and who asked me to apologize to you for him for not being here. He is very interested in what you have to say, and I know he and the other members of the Commission will be reviewing your testimony and will be looking forward with great interest to your progress here in the United States.

Both of you, of course, are very talented individuals, and it is the privilege of this Commission, I think, to have had the opportunity to meet so many persons of which you are one—and you are one, Igor, who have showed so much courage and so much commitment in furthering the cause, Irina, as you refer to it, of the good over the bad. You each bear witness to the transcendent issues of humanity, not the political differences that may occur on a day-to-day basis, but the transcendent issues with which the Helsinki Final Act really dealt, that is, how nations ought to treat their own citizens and how each of us needs to be concerned not only about how our own citizens are treated, but how the citizens of other nations are treated.

That was really a radical forward step taken, in my opinion, in large part because of the Holocaust during which for too many years too many people assumed that because the actions were being taken in another nation, it really did not concern them. What you speak out for, what your poetry speaks to and what you are a compelling witness for, is that we are, indeed, our brother's

keeper, and that we need to be concerned about the plight of all peoples lest none of us be free.

So the Commission thanks you both not only, as I say, for what you have done, but what you are doing and are going to be doing. We congratulate you and thank you.

This hearing is adjourned. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 11:08 a.m., the Commission was adjourned, subject to the call of the Chair.]

APPENDIX A

Informal Translation
by the Helsinki Commission staff
of Poems by
Irina Ratushinskaya
Presented by the Soviet state as "evidence" at her trial

I

My hateful homeland!
Nothing is more shameful than your nights.
How did you get so lucky
With your silly admirers,
With your serfs and executioners!
How did you produce true believers,
How persistent you were, destroying
Those -- who were bought
and those who were sold,
Condemned to love you!
Blameless are your frightened ones--
Why are your nightingales silent?
Why on the crosses of the outraged
Are your tears
freezing?
How I dream of your crucifixion!
How soon will I go down their path
After you --
native,
damned --
To go to such a death!
By the most terrible road --
By the edge of hatred
and of love --
Shamed, pitiful,
Mother and stepmother,
Bless me!

II

But we remain --
In the squares of a monstrous chess game --
We have all been arrested.
Our coffee
Smells like burned letters
And post offices smell
Like purloined letters.
City blocks are deafened --
And there is no one to shout: "Don't!" --
And visages with eyes closed
Molded on facades.
And every night
Birds fly out of the city,
And blindly
Our dawns are lit up.
Wait!
Perhaps -- we have dreamed all this?
But the morning newspapers will come out.

III

Don't try to take control,
If a boy looks at things like a man
Consider it a loss, you exemplary mother-land!
As you quickly stopped blessing your departing son,
Instead, you cruelly learned to curse him!

With what do you salt your bread --
So that you don't always attracted to someone else's,
How you release your hard-working dogs onto the trail,
Don't bother telling us again
About poverty, about prison, about the nightmare of the
insane asylum
We have learned it well enough already

Who was too winged,
Who was out of favor from birth,
Don't try to take control, to buy, to punish, and to threaten.
You can't catch us.
We are pull away, pull away, pull away ...
They say that one cannot hear a bullet in the back.

IV

The seventies -- sadness!
The seventies -- shame
How you are bloated!
And no fence --
Not even the ultimate one --
Can protect me
from the rubbish of those shameful years:
They will take only what they can get
They will shove someone a Party card,
They will give someone a residence permit and a bank book,
They will send someone to a psychiatric ward, and someone --
Love, born in captivity!
An unfed in your own home
Child, thrown out into a field --
Will quiet down towards evening: don't cry
Don't wheeze ... So quiet! These years
Are the seventies -- executioner!
The seventies -- weather
Is impatient: not by the sea
(One can't go to the sea!),
Not by the border ...
Let those years end faster,
Which like vipers,
Like snakes -- sly -- into every house!
And between every other person -- inclement!
The soul, born a slave!
An infant, thrown out of its crib
For ill-will!
Throw the seventies a bone
From bone, keeping the flesh,

In the eighties (God,
Preserve!) --
Almost weightless --
Go:
The dream is no longer terrible --
Go:
One wants one's rights!
Go:
The filled up ditch
Don't catch your bare foot on its edge:
And how do you get up now?
A bedsheet
Will cover: what is there ahead?
Don't ask!
Alive -- go on!

V

(This poem, written as a joke for her husband's birthday on November 3, 1979, was originally written in Russian, Ukrainian and English. In the translation, words which were originally in English are in quotes.)

Why do I have long eyelashes,
Golden teeth
If they have ruined Ukraine,
And even Russia?
We have freedom of speech --
But who hears it?
There is people's power too --
But who rules?
I have a university diploma,
But the poet said:
-- Mama gave a reddish mustache,
But no "flat".
They don't understand me here,
Here they have a different approach ...
So let them live as they wish
"I shall move abroad."
There the grass is not crumpled,
It is easy to breathe,
At least they pay wages,
And meat rations.
There work is great
And salaries are high,
There a car is new --
In a word, "very nice."
There is no problem with food,
There is no problem with casting --
Even in the White House --
There is democracy ...
When I arrive in the USA
I will have a house.
And when I have a house --
There will be "children,"
And when I have "children" --

I will teach them:
-- Do not, my dear ones, join
The Communist Party!

Letter in the 21st Year

Leave on this side of the earth
The posthumous trial and the unjust conviction.
They bound you together one hundred times with the roots
Of the forgetful grass of your cruel native country.
    From this earth, which no longer exists,
Which fought with itself,
Out of the slough of Russian darkness and poverty --
I can hear your calm voice.
    Time -- midnight -- clearly beats in my temple.
Yes, conquistador! Yes, stubborn architect!
In your Russia there are no more lines --
But there is the language of leaden suspension marks.
Don't you know?
    So teach me
In the desperation of the final barricade,
When they hoarsely say:
                -- Fire, fire! --
Understand, forgive -- but do not accept mercy!
    And let the grass whirl ritually --
It is accustomed, it's not much work for it.
But, perhaps, then the words will come to me,
With which I will stand before God.

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